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PRESS RELEASE

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Impaired Driving- The Scariest Part of Halloween

Sacramento, CA – Halloween is one of the scariest days of year for many reasons, ghosts and goblins aside, not only does it rank as the day with the highest number of child pedestrian deaths, but it also brings some of the highest numbers in terms of holiday related DUI and pedestrian deaths. The California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) is providing important tips and prevention education to ensure a safe and fun Halloween for everyone.

“Halloween is meant to be a time of fun for children and adults,” said OTS Director Christopher J. Murphy. “But if people forget to remain responsible when celebrating, it can lead to disaster. OTS is strongly encouraging parents, children, and partygoers to stay alert and safe this Halloween.”

Halloween has become a major party celebration for adults, which can lead to drunk or drugged driving behaviors as people get caught up in the excitement of the evening. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 41 percent of all highway fatalities throughout the nation during the Halloween period in 2010, involved a driver or a motorcycle rider with a blood alcohol concentration at or above the legal limit of .08.

“Watch for children walking on roadways, medians and curb, and in dark costumes – they'll be harder to see at night,” said Murphy. “Be aware that trick-or-treaters may not be paying attention to traffic and may run out mid-block or between parked cars. Motorists should scan far ahead when driving in residential areas, watch for children and cautiously monitor their actions.”

Pedestrian deaths are double the average on Halloween in California, with more than half involving alcohol or drugs. This Halloween, motorists, partygoers and hosts should take the following tips into consideration when planning their celebrations:

- Avoid driving through residential areas where trick-or-treaters are likely to be present.
- Turn on your headlights to make yourself more visible – even in daylight.

- Obey all traffic signs and signals. The risk of killing a pedestrian increases more than many people realize with just small increases in speed. A pedestrian is nearly twice as likely to be killed if they're hit by a car going 30 mph compared to one traveling at 25 mph.
- Plan ahead if you will be celebrating with alcohol this Halloween. Save the number of a cab company in your phone before heading out for the night, or plan ahead and designate a sober driver. If you are out and have had too much to drink, walk to a nearby hotel and get a room, call a sober friend or family member to pick you up, or take a taxi.
- Party hosts should have plenty of food on hand to avoid having to leave once the party has started and guests have begun drinking. It is also strongly recommended that hosts offer non-alcoholic drink choices for their guests and designated drivers.

For non-alcoholic designated driver drinks, or DDrink recipes, please visit the OTS Facebook page at www.facebook.com/CaliforniaOTS or follow OTS on Twitter @OTS_CA. For more information on all OTS efforts, visit www.ots.ca.gov

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